Capitol Comments

by Dan Daniels

WASHINGTON- Dec. 15 - This week, the Electoral College met and confirmed the election of the thirty-ninth President of the United States.

Few things are certain in these uncertain times, but of this you can be sure: in mid-November of every Election Year, there will be page after page written, urging that the Electoral College be abolished. The Electoral College is also a matter of interest to students who are enrolled in government classes, and as a consequence we receive many letters on the subject. Some of the writers have formed their opinions; many more, though, simply seek more information and an understanding of why we continue to employ a method which is cumbersome, and perhaps archaic, in naming those who will occupy the highest elective offices in our land.

Because the matter is often more talked aobut than understood, and also because it is likely to be the subject of legislation in the 95th Congress, we have put together background information and recommendatons which may prove helpful.

The present system did not have total support at the time of the Constitutional Convention in 1787. It was a consensus decision, calculated to offend the least number of delegates, and while none appeared to be wildly enthusiastic, it is satisfied those who felt the election should reflect the will of the majority and those who were equally committed to the idea that ours was a confederation of states. In the first four elections the electors voted for two individuals. The winner of the greatest number of votes was declared president, with the runner-up becoming vice president.

By 1796, three changes had taken place. First, the elector's role became that of agent for the voters. That is, electoral votes were cast to reflect popular preference, rather than on the independent determination of the electors. Also, electors in most states tended to give all the state's electoral votes to the candidate whose ticket won the statewide plurality, and thus the winner-take-all element was introduced. And finally, candidates for the two offices formed tickets, with the understanding that one of the two votes cast by successful electors was for a President and the other for a Vice President.

None of these amendments requires a Constitutional change, although the latter practice led to adoption of the Twelfth Amendment, in reaction to the situation following the election of 1800, when Thomas Jefferson and Aaaron Burr received identical electoral votes, and the election was decided in the House of Representatives.

Those who seek change in the process regularly call up the ghost of the "accidental president". By employing the electoral college, a president can be inaugurated who received less than a majority of the popular vote. Can it happen? Yes - it has twice. In 1876, Rutherford B. Hayes received one more electoral vote than Samuel J. Tilden, even though Tilden led by some 250,000 popular votes. And in 1888, Benjamin Harrison, with about 95,000 fewer popular votes, was chosen by the electors over Grover Cleveland. What generally happens, though, is that the electoral vote enlarges, rather than diminishes, the popular vote. In 1960, the winner's popular vote margin was two-tenths of one percent; he received 56.4 percent of the electoral vote.

There have been three alternatives to our present system put forth. Each has advantages, each has disadvantages.

The most frequently mentioned is direct opular election, with the candidates elected receiving the most popular votes, providing this is at least 40 percent of the votes cast. Supporters say this is the only way to insure popular choice, and that voter participation would be enhanced in states dominated by one party, since all votes would carry equal weight. Opponents feel this would cause candidates to concentrate on densely populated areas, since a handful of cities could dictate the outcome.

A second proposal is the proportional method, whereby each candidate would receive electoral votes in a percentage to reflect the popular vote within a state. Supporters say this would provide the same incentive to participate as direct election, but would preserve the relative electoral strength of the states. Opponents say the popular vote winner could still lose the election, and that by clever strategy minor parties could deny an electoral majority or a constitutional plurality (that 40 percent of the votes cast mentioned earlier).

The third proposal is the district method, whereby one elector would be chosen from each of the 435 Congressional Districts, with two at-large electors for each state. Supporters feel this would most closely reflect the political will of the people, since electors would be chosen by the same constituencies who choose Members of Congress and that minor parties would be encouraged to compete. Opponents feel this could thwart the popular will, just as the present system could, and that the same opportunity for denial of a constitutional plurality exists.

So there you have it - the potential problem, the proposed solutions. It will be interesting to watch developments in the months ahead.

Trail Ride Clinic Planned At Syria

BLACKSBURG- A North American Trail Conference (NATRC) trail ride clinic will be held at Graves' Mountain Lodge, Syria, on Saturday, January 22, 1977, Arden N. Huff, Extension animal scientist at Virginia Tech, announced.

The Regiona 5 clinic is open to all adult and youth horse enthusiasts. Competitive 4-H riders are especially invited to participate in the clinic.

Clinic topics will include veterinary judging, horsemanship judging, horse rider conditioning, ride management, and trail riding. Instructors will include Bill Throgmorton (cq) Gilroy, Calif.; Fred C. Kirkham, president, NATRC, Walnut Creek, Calif., and Carl White, Cornell University,Ithaca, N.Y.

Clinic chairmen are Alan Spivey, Syria; H. S. Tracy, Mechanicsville, and Steve Pekary, (cq) Madison Extension agent. Lucy will also serve as master of ceremonies for the program. Huff, Tech Extension horse specialist, and Tom Leonard, North Carolina State University, are serving as advisers to the planning committee.

Bill Jennings, president of the Virginia Horse Council, endorsed the clinic, noting that trail riding and development are major concerns to veterinarians, judges, riders and everyone interested in trail riding.

Pre-registration is required. Program are available from local Virginia Tech Extension agents or from Mrs. Alan Sivey, Graves' Mountain Lodge, Syria, Va. 22743.

It's a party!

THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS

Everyone gets into the act at this favorite Christmas party. Invite dear friends and relatives for a heart-warming evening for all. The hostess heaps baskets with ribbons, popcorn, colored papers and cellophane, foil, seals, bells, colored yarns, scissors, glue, whatever. Each one makes ornaments from whatever suits his or her fancy, and then uses them to trim the tree. Prizes can be awarded for the funniest, prettiest, or cleverest ornament. After light refreshments, guests take home one or two of their creations for their own tree.

Letters To Santa

December 12, 1976

Dear Santa Claus,

We love you Santa. We love our Granddaddy and Gran. We have been good boys at school. We have been good almost everyday. My brother (Matt) and I clean our rooms without Mommy telling us. This is our Christmas list:

Star Trek Enterprize
Sesame Street Toys
Maskatron-Robot
Evel Knievel "Super Cycle"
Stretch Armstrong
Wizard of Oz
Mighty Mac Trucks
Match Box Cars
Some Surprises and Candy

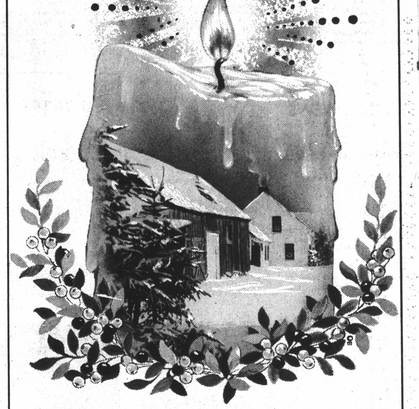
Merry Christmas.

Wes and Matt Martin
Memphis, Tennessee

GREETINGS of the season to our many good friends! We hope your Christmas is bright with love and joy.

Jeanne's Restaurant and Steak House

Main Street, Appomattox Va.

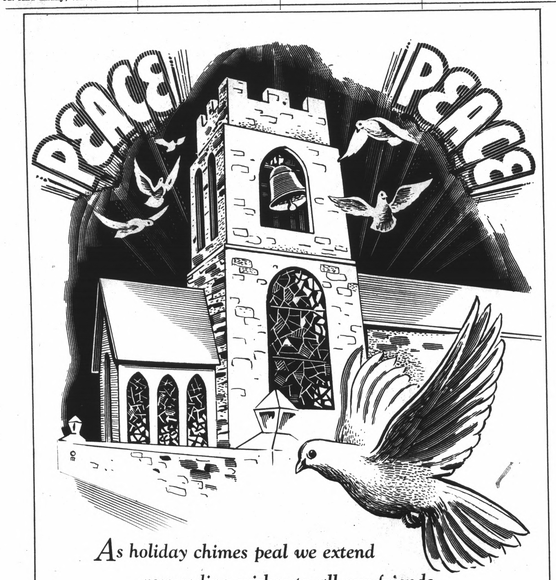


GREETINGS

We hope that the true spirit of Christmas will bring a glow to your spirits, warmth to your heart. Thanks to all!

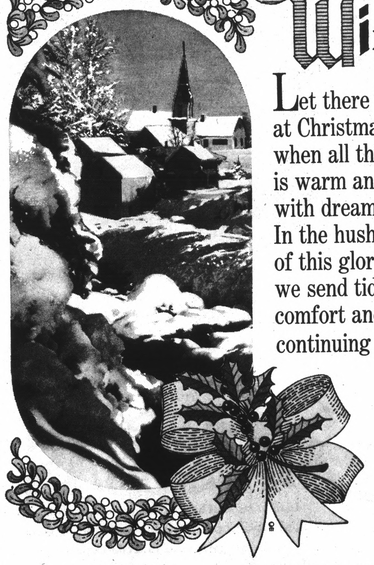
Moses Motor Co., Inc.

Rt. 460 - Moses St. Appomattox, Va.



As holiday chimes peal we extend resounding wishes to all our friends... may Hope, Love and Peace be with you at Christmas and always.

WFLO - A.M.
AND
WFLO - F.M.
FARMVILLE, VA.



Christmas Wishes

Let there be love at Christmas when all the world is warm and bright with dreams. In the hushed landscape of this glorious season, we send tidings of comfort and joy and continuing thanks to all!

Fidelity American Bank

Main Street & Hillcrest Branch Appomattox, Va.

Then And Now

By: Frances H. Paulette

"MERRY CHRISTMAS"

Christmas, 1976 --- it's almost here. For weeks, even months, we've been planning, shopping, wrapping, getting ready for Christmas morning. Now, a little feeling of doubt begins to creep in our mind --- "did we get just the right gift for Aunt Sophie? She's such a meticulous, exacting, little old lady, so hard to please." One doubt leads to another; did we by any chance, leave out anyone on our gift list? Perhaps we had better check just one more time.

Let's go back in time to the days of THEN, maybe we can see what there was to offer last minute shoppers. I have before me a copy of **The Times-Virginian**, dated Dec. 18, 1918. My, what bargains! Let's browse for a little while, maybe we can get some ideas.

I see R. N. Hillsman, a Lynchburg Store, has a big ad in the paper. For the ladies there are the finest quality winter coats from $6.98 to $10.98. What an extravagant gift that would make, don't you agree? Maybe some shoes to go with the coat --- Gun Metal patent kid at just $3.98. Now if it happened that you had to keep careful watch on your spending, there were quite a few gifts guaranteed to please the most discriminating person on your list, yet not wreck the budget. There were boudoir caps from 10c up to 69c, depending on the quality and style; crepe kimonos at $1.69, or even a fancy petticoat for $1.48. A bungalow apron was always a suitable gift if you weren't sure what the lady of the house might need.

If it was the men you had forgotten, you could find quite a selection from which to choose. Top quality dress shirts for $1.48 would make any man happy; men's black dress hose for 15c and 25c, or even a pair of overgaiters ranging in price from 69c to $1.48.

The list goes on, children's union suits from 59c to 79c would really make a practical gift, though probably not too happily accepted by child on the receiving end of such a gift! There was muslin underwear for the family and teddies for the ladies.

If it happened that your Brass Radiator Model T was not running in top form, you might want to take advantage of the well-stocked, home-owned stores right here in Appomattox. The following is taken from the **Times-Virginian** Dec. 18, 1918. I quote:

"The Appomattox Hardware, an old established institution, has grown to be a popular shopping place for many useful holiday gifts. Manager Tadd Sears, Eddie Moore, and Richard Smith are always happy to help you. A Monarch Range for cooking the holiday meals would really be welcomed by Mother; a new buggy and robe for the son, and kodaks and cutlery for other family members."

If you didn't find just the right gift at the Appomattox Hardware, you might try Brown and Smith, and I again quote: "This comparatively new concern, located in the new Atwood Block succeeds the firm of Burge and Brown. Judge Brown, the senior member renders no harsh decisions in this store; staid and tried LeRoy Smith, by long and honorable association and dealing with the people of Appomattox makes you feel that every protection and guarantee is afforded for each dollar that is spent with them. The affable and experienced clerks, R. C. Mann who enjoys a joke as much as the holiday dram; Mrs. Ola Patteson, and Mrs. Mazie Harvey, alert and always obliging. This concern can fit you out from a machine needle to a reinforced concrete mansion."

Still haven't found the right gift? Let's look still more. I quote again - "Allison Inge, the prince of country merchants makes everyone feel at home. Your old friend Harrison Burge looks natural as he smiles behind the counter. Mrs. Bessie James, whose taste is sought by careful shoppers is always ready to greet you. Luther Morris, like an old friend, makes you feel good. If your gift comes from James Drug Store, it will be highly acceptable and appreciated, and the donor will live long in the memory of the receiver long after the fragrance is gone."

Seems like if we were shopping for last minute gifts in the days of THEN we would have no trouble with all the capable and friendly people in the Appomattox stores waiting to help you.

So, now the shopping is done, maybe not quite the things we would buy today, certainly not the price we would pay today. The shopping has changed, the streets of Appomattox have changed, the people have changed; one thing remains the same --- the real meaning of Christmas. Jesus was born in Bethlehem long ago for the people in the days of THEN, for us in the days of NOW, for all people in the days to come. As you hurry about getting all the last minute things done, won't you pause, give thanks that He was born, and does live in the hearts of all who accept Him.

May this be the happiest Christmas ever!

IT PAYS TO ADVERTISE IN THE TIMES-VIRGINIAN

Christ is Born...

Let us rejoice and join together with Christmas spirit to celebrate His birth.

Gladys Johnson

BIG RIDE AT A SMALL PRICE

'77's HERE NOW!

COME SEE THE ALL-NEW Volare

QUIET, ROOMY COMFORTABLE & ECONOMICAL

YOU WON'T BELIEVE THE PRICE

AUTHORIZED DEALER CHRYSLER MOTORS CORPORATION

ADAMS MOTOR CO.

813 FIFTH ST. LYNCHBURG, VA. 845-3456

Parents Learn More About Parenthood

CHESAPEAKE - Many parents of pre-school age children apparently want to learn more about how to be better parents.

Their requests for child rearing advice and information from Extension agents here have led to classes on child rearing during the past two years.

The first series of four child development classes was started early in 1975 by agents and Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) technicians.

Mrs. Betsy Schenck, Extension specialist in child development at Virginia State College, Petersburg, helped Extension agents, Mrs. Mildred A. Brady and Mrs. Vera B. Keeble to plan and teach these classes. A child development specialist at the Chesapeake Public Library also assisted in planning.

Mrs. Brady said that participants' response led to the series being offered twice last year and they plan to offer a similar program this spring.

"They were a highly motivated group. They came seeking information, asked many questions and wanted to discuss their child rearing practices," Mrs. Brady added.

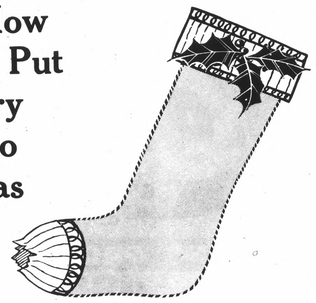
Not only parents have benefitted from the classes, but children as well. While the parents were in child rearing sessions held at the library, their children participated in play and learning activities in another room. EFNEP technicians, the childrens' librarian and volunteers supervised the kids in nutrition nursery rhymes, coloring food pictures, story telling, active games, movies and snacks.

DRIVE SAFELY & LIVE!

Bennett T. Matthews, Inc.

ATWOOD STREET APPOMATTOX, VA.

Here's How You Can Put the Merry Back Into Christmas



WE'LL MEND THE HOLE IN YOUR CHRISTMAS STOCKING

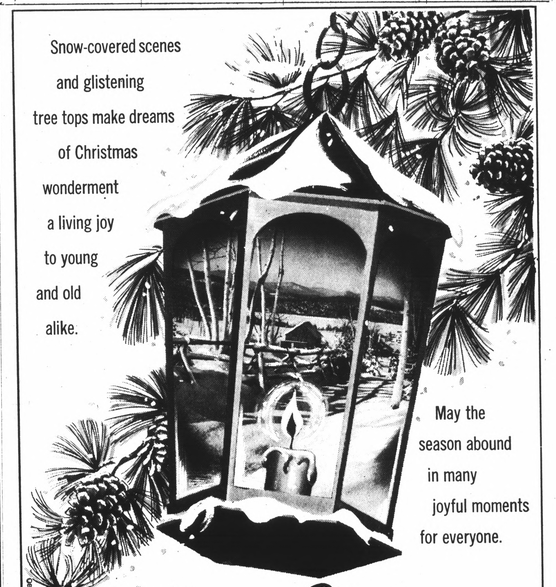
You'll be out of the red in no time at all, with a personal loan you can repay in comfortable monthly payments.

Farmers National Bank

TWO CONVENIENT LOCATIONS TO SERVE YOU
TRIANGLE PLAZA SHOPPING CENTER
AND DOWNTOWN

YOUR HOME OWNED AND OPERATED BANK
APPOMATTOX, VA.
MEMBER FEDERAL DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION
MEMBER FEDERAL RESERVE SYSTEM

Snow-covered scenes and glistening tree tops make dreams of Christmas wonderment a living joy to young and old alike.



May the season abound in many joyful moments for everyone.

Merry Christmas

Appomattox Post Office

Ora McCoy, John Hall, Red Jamerson, Virginia Doss, Betty R. Gallier, Wayne Lee, Twyman Coleman, Billy Conner, John Gunter, Bill Williamson, Dillard Franklin, Bill Sperry & Norman Campbell